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REMARKS

ON THE

ESSAYS

ON THE

PRINCIPLES of MORALITY,

AND

NATURAL RELIGION.

IN A

LETTER

To a Minister of the CHURCH of SCOTLAND;

By the Reverend

Mr. JONATHAN EDWARDS,

President of the College of NEW JERSEY, and
Author of the late INQUIRY into the MODERN
NOTIONS of the FREEDOM of WILL.

THIRD EDITION.

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AND

NATURAL RELIGION



BY

JOHN H. STUART

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OF LINCOLN'S INN

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Printed by J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard

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R E M A R K S

O N T H E

ESSAYS on the PRINCIPLES of MORALITY and NATURAL RELIGION,

In a LETTER to a Minister of the CHURCH of SCOTLAND.

Rev. S I R,

THE Intimations ybu have given me of the Use which has, by some, been made of what I have written on the *Freedom of the Will*, &c. to vindicate what is said on the Subject of Liberty and Necessity by the Author of the *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, has occasioned my reading this Author's Essay on that Subject, with particular Care and Attention. And I think it must be evident to every one, that has read both his *Essay* and my *Inquiry*, that our Schemes are exceeding reverse from each other. The wide Difference appears particularly in the following Things.

This Author supposes, that such a Necessity takes place with respect to all Mens Actions, as is inconsistent with Liberty ^a, and plainly denies that Men have any Liberty in acting. Thus in p. 168. after he had been speaking of the Necessity of our Determinations,

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minations,

^a P, 160, 161, 164, 165, and many other Places.

minations, as connected with Motives, he concludes with saying, " In short, if Motives are not under our Power or Direction, which is confessedly the Fact, we can at Bottom have — NO LIBERTY." Whereas I have abundantly expressed it as my Mind, that Man, in his moral Actions, has true Liberty; and that the moral Necessity which universally takes Place, is not in the least inconsistent with any thing that is properly called Liberty, and with the utmost Liberty that can be desired, or that can possibly exist or be conceived of^b.

I find that some are apt to think, that in that Kind of moral Necessity of Mens Volitions, which I suppose to be universal, at least some Degree of Liberty is denied; that though it be true I allow a Sort of Liberty, yet those who maintain a self-determining Power in the Will, and a Liberty of Contingence and Indifference, hold an higher Sort of Freedom than I do: but I think this is certainly a great Mistake.

Liberty, as I have explained it, in p. 38. and other Places, is *the Power, Opportunity, or Advantage that any one has to do as he pleases, or conducting, IN ANY RESPECT, according to his Pleasure*; without considering how his Pleasure comes to be as it is. It is demonstrable, and I think has been demonstrated, that no Necessity of Mens Volitions that I maintain, is inconsistent with this Liberty: and I think it is impossible for any one to rise higher in his Conceptions of Liberty than this: If any imagine they desire higher, and that they conceive of a higher and greater Liberty than this, they are deceived, and delude themselves with confused ambiguous Words, instead of Ideas. If any one should here say, " Yes, I conceive of a Freedom above and beyond the Liberty a Man has of conducting in any

^b *Inquiry*, P. 38—43, 186, 187, 278—288, 300, 307, 326—335.

any Respect as he pleases, *viz.* a Liberty of *chusing* as he pleases." Such an one, if he reflected, would either blush or laugh at his own Instance. For, is not chusing as he pleases, conducting, IN SOME RESPECT, according to his Pleasure, and still without determining how he came by that Pleasure? If he says, "Yes, I came by that Pleasure by my own Choice." If he be a Man of common Sense, by this Time he will see his own Absurdity: for he must needs see that his Notion or Conception, even of this Liberty, don't contain any Judgment or Conception how he comes by that Choice, which first determines his Pleasure, or which originally fixed his own Will respecting the Affair. Or if any shall say, "That a Man exercises Liberty in this, even in determining his own Choice, but not as he pleases, or not in Consequence of any Choice, Preference, or Inclination of his own, but by a Determination arising contingently out of a State of absolute Indifference;" this is not rising higher in his Conception of Liberty: as such a Determination of the Will would not be a voluntary Determination of it. Surely he that places Liberty in a Power of doing something not according to his own Choice, or from his Choice, has not a higher Notion of it, than he that places it in doing as he pleases, or acting from his own Election. If there were a Power in the Mind to determine itself, but not by its Choice or according to its Pleasure, what Advantage would it give? and what Liberty, worth contending for, would be exercised in it? Therefore no *Arminian*, *Pelagian*, or *Epicurean*, can rise higher in his Conceptions of Liberty, than the Notion of it which I have explained: which Notion is, apparently, perfectly consistent with the whole of that Necessity of Mens Actions, which I suppose takes Place. And I scruple not to say 'tis beyond all their Wits to invent a higher Notion, or

form a higher Imagination of Liberty ; let them talk of *Sovereignty of the Will, self-determining Power, Self-motion, Self-direction, arbitrary Decision, Liberty ad utrumvis, Power of chusing differently in given Cases, &c. &c.* as long as they will. 'Tis apparent that these Men, in their strenuous Affirmation, and Dispute about these Things, aim at they know not what, fighting for something they have no Conception of, substituting a Number of confused unmeaning Words, instead of Things, and instead of Thoughts. They may be challenged clearly to explain what they would have : they never can answer the Challenge.

The Author of the *Essays*, through his whole Essay on Liberty and Necessity, goes on that Supposition, that, in order to the Being of real Liberty, a Man must have a Freedom that is opposed to moral Necessity : and yet he supposes, P. 175, that *such a Liberty must signify a Power in the Mind of acting without and against Motives, a Power of acting without any View, Purpose or Design, and even of acting in Contradiction to our own Desires and Aversions, and to all our Principles of Action ; and is an Absurdity altogether inconsistent with a rational Nature.* Now, who ever imagined such a Liberty as this, a higher Sort or Degree of Freedom, than a Liberty of following one's own Views and Purposes, and acting agreeable to his own Inclinations and Passions ? Who will ever reasonably suppose that Liberty, which is an Absurdity altogether inconsistent with a rational Nature, to be a Kind of Liberty above that which is consistent with the nature of a rational intelligent designing Agent.

The Author of the *Essays* seems to suppose such a Necessity to take Place, as is inconsistent with some supposable POWER OF ARBITRARY CHOICE^c ; or that there is some Liberty conceivable, whereby
Mens,

Mens own Actions might be more PROPERLY IN THEIR POWER^d, and by which Events might be more DEPENDENT ON OURSELVES^e: contrary to what I suppose to be evident in my *Inquiry*^f. What Way can be imagined, of our Actions being more *in our Power, from ourselves, or dependent on ourselves*, than their being from our Power to fulfil our own Choice, to act from our own Inclination, pursue our own Views, and execute our own Designs? Certainly, to be able to act thus, is as properly having our Actions in our Power, and dependent on ourselves, as a Being liable to be the Subjects of Acts and Events, contingently and fortuitously, *without Desire, View, Purpose or Design, or any Principle of Action* within ourselves; as we must be, according to this Author's own declared Sense, if our Actions are performed with that Liberty that is opposed to moral Necessity.

This Author seems every where to suppose, that Necessity, most properly so called, attends all Mens Actions; and that the Terms *necessary, unavoidable, impossible, &c.* are equally applicable to the Case of moral and natural Necessity. In P. 173, he says, *The Idea of necessary and unavoidable equally agrees, both to moral and physical Necessity.* And in P. 184. *All Things that fall out in the natural and moral World are alike necessary.* P. 174. *This Inclination and Choice is unavoidably caused or occasioned by the prevailing Motive. In this lies the Necessity of our Actions, that in such Circumstances it was impossible we could act otherwise.* He often expresses himself in like Manner elsewhere, speaking in strong Terms of Mens Actions as *unavoidable*, what they cannot forbear, having *no Power* over their own Actions, the Order of them being *unalterably fixed*, and *inseparably linked together*, &c. &c.

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On

^d P. 191, 185, 197, 206. ^e P. 183. ^f P. 395, 396.
^g P. 180, 188, 193, 194, 195, 197, 198, 199, 205, 206.

On the contrary, I have largely declared, that the Connection between antecedent Things and consequent ones, which takes Place with regard to the Acts of Mens Wills, which is called moral Necessity, is called by the Name of *Necessity* improperly; and that all such Terms as *must, cannot, impossible, unable, irresistible, unavoidable, invincible, &c.* when applied here, are not applied in their proper Signification, and are either used nonsensically, and with perfect Insignificance, or in a Sense quite diverse from their original and proper Meaning, and their Use in common Speech^h: and that such a Necessity as attends the Acts of Mens Wills, is more properly called *Certainty*, than *Necessity*; it being no other than the certain Connection between the Subject and Predicate of the Proposition which affirms their Existenceⁱ.

Agreeable to what is observed in my *Inquiry*^k, I think it is evidently owing to a strong Prejudice in Persons Minds, arising from an insensible habitual Perversion and Misapplication of such-like Terms, as *necessary, impossible, unable, unavoidable, invincible, &c.* that they are ready to think, that to suppose a certain Connection of Mens Volitions without any foregoing Motives or Inclinations, or any preceding moral Influence whatsoever, is truly and properly to suppose such a strong irrefragable Chain of Causes and Effects, as stands in the Way of, and makes utterly vain, opposite Desires and Endeavours, like immovable and impenetrable Mountains of Brass; and impedes our Liberty like Walls of Adamant, Gates of Brass, and Bars of Iron: whereas all such Representations suggest Ideas as far from the Truth, as the East is from the West. Nothing that

^h *Inquiry*, P. 18—28, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 232, 289—293, 296, 304—308, 397, 398, ⁱ *Inquiry*, P. 22—24.
^k P. 289—293.

that I maintain, supposes that Men are at all hindered by any fatal Necessity, from doing, and even willing and chusing as they please, with full Freedom; yea with the highest Degree of Liberty that ever was thought of, or that ever could possibly enter into the Heart of any Man to conceive. I know it is in vain to endeavour to make some Persons believe this, or at least fully and steadily to believe it: for if it be demonstrated to them, still the old Prejudice remains, which has been long fixed by the Use of the Terms *necessary, must, cannot, impossible, &c.* the Association with these Terms of certain Ideas inconsistent with Liberty, is not broken; and the Judgment is powerfully warped by it; as a Thing that has been long bent and grown stiff, if it be straitened, will return to its former Curvity again and again.

The Author of the *Essays* most manifestly supposes, that if Men had the Truth concerning the real Necessity of all their Actions clearly in View, they would not appear to themselves, or one another, as at all Praise-worthy or culpable, or under any moral Obligation, or accountable for their Actions¹: which supposes, that Men are not to be blamed or praised for any of their Actions, and are not under any Obligations, nor are truly accountable for any thing they do, by Reason of this Necessity; which is very contrary to what I have endeavoured to prove, throughout the *third Part* of my *Inquiry*. I humbly conceive it is there shewn, that this is so far from the Truth, that the moral Necessity of Mens Actions, which truly take Place, is requisite to the Being of Virtue and Vice, or any thing Praise-worthy or culpable: that the Liberty of Indifference and Contingence, which is advanced in Opposition to that Necessity, is inconsistent with the Being of these;

¹ P. 207, 209, and other Places.

these; as it would suppose that Men are not determined in what they do, by any virtuous or vicious Principles, nor act from any Motives, Intentions or Aims whatsoever; or have any End, either good or bad, in acting. And is it not remarkable, that this Author should suppose, that, in order to Mens Actions truly having any Desert, they must be performed *without any View, Purpose, Design, or Desire, or any Principle of Action, or any thing agreeable to a rational Nature?* As it will appear that he does, if we compare P. 206, 207, with P. 175.

The Author of the *Essays* supposes, that God has deeply implanted in Man's Nature, a strong and invincible Apprehension, or Feeling, as he calls it, of a Liberty, and Contingence of his own Actions, opposite to that Necessity which truly attends them; and which in Truth don't agree with real Fact^m, is not agreeable to strict philosophic Truthⁿ, is contradictory to the Truth of Things^o, and which Truth contradicts^p, not tallying with the real Plan^{*}: and that therefore such Feelings are deceitful^q, are in Reality of the delusive Kind^r. He speaks of them as a wise Delusion^s, as nice artificial Feelings, merely that Conscience may have a commanding Power^t: meaning plainly, that these Feelings are a cunning Artifice of the Author of Nature, to make Men believe they are free, when they are not^u. He supposes that by these Feelings the moral World has a disguised Appearance^w. And other Things of this Kind he says. He supposes that all Self-approbation, and all Remorse of Conscience, all Commendation or Condemnation of ourselves or others, all Sense of Desert, and all that is connected with this Way of thinking, all the Ideas, which at present are suggested by the Words *ought, should*, arise from this

^m P. 200. ⁿ P. 152. ^o P. 183. ^p P. 186. ^{*} P. 205.
^q P. 203, 204, 211. ^r P. 183. ^s P. 209. ^t P. 211.
^u P. 153. ^w P. 214.

this Delusion, and would entirely vanish without it ^x.

All which is very contrary to what I have abundantly insisted on and endeavoured to demonstrate in my *Inquiry*; where I have largely shewn, that it is agreeable to the natural Sense of Mankind, that the moral Necessity or Certainty that attends Mens Actions, is consistent with Praise and Blame, Reward and Punishment ^y; and that it is agreeable to our natural Notions, that moral Evil, with its Desert of Dislike and Abhorrence, and all its other Ill-deservings, consists in a certain Deformity in the Nature of the Dispositions and Acts of the Heart, and not in the Evil of something else, diverse from these, supposed to be their Cause or Occasion ^z.

I might well ask here, whether any one is to be found in the World of Mankind, who is conscious to a Sense or Feeling, naturally and deeply rooted in his Mind, that, in order to a Man's performing any Action that is Praise or Blame-worthy, he must exercise a Liberty that implies and signifies a Power of acting without any Motive, View, Design, Desire, or Principle of Action? For such a Liberty this Author supposes That must be which is opposed to moral Necessity, as I have already observed once and again. Supposing a Man should actually do Good, independent of Desire, Aim, Inducement, Principle or End, is it a Dictate of invincible natural Sense, that his Act is more meritorious or Praise-worthy than if he had performed it for some *good End*, and had been governed in it by *good Principles* and *Motives*? And so I might ask, on the contrary, with Respect to evil Actions ^a.

The

^x P. 160, 194, 199, 205, 206, 207, 209. ^y *Inquiry* Part IV. Sect. 4. throughout. ^z *Idem*, Part IV. Sect. 1. throughout, and P. 395—397.

^a See this Matter illustrated in my *Inquiry*, Part IV. Sect. 4. especially P. 302—304.

The Author of the *Essays* supposes that the Liberty without Necessity which we have a natural Feeling of, implies *Contingence* : and speaking of this Contingence, he sometimes calls it by the Name of *Chance*. And 'tis evident, that his Notion of it, or rather what he says about it, implies Things happening *loosely, fortuitously, by Accident, and without a Cause*^b. Now I conceive the slightest Reflection may be sufficient to satisfy any one, that such a Contingence of Mens Actions, according to our natural Sense, is so far from being essential to the Morality or Merit of those Actions, that it would destroy it ; and that, on the contrary, the Dependence of our Actions on such Causes, as inward Inclinations, Incitements and Ends, is essential to the Being of it. Natural Sense teaches Men, when they see any thing done by others of a good or evil Tendency, to inquire what their Intention was ; what Principles and Views they were moved by, in order to judge how far they are to be justified or condemned ; and not to determine, that, in order to their being approved or blamed at all, the Action must be performed altogether fortuitously, proceeding from nothing, arising from no Cause. Concerning this Matter, I have fully expressed my Mind in the *Inquiry*^c.

If the Liberty which we have a natural Sense of as necessary to Desert, consists in the Mind's Self-determination, without being determined by previous Inclination or Motive, then Indifference is essential to it, yea absolute Indifference ; as is observed in my *Inquiry*^d. But Men naturally have no Notion of any such Liberty as this, as essential to the Morality or Demerit of their Actions ; but, on the contrary, such a Liberty, if it were possible, would be
inconsistent

^b P. 156, 157, 158, 159, 177, 178, 181, 183, 184, 85.

^c P. 258—261, 267, 302, 303, and other Places.

^d 89—91.

inconsistent with our natural Notions of Desert, as is largely shown in the *Inquiry*^e. If it be agreeable to natural Sense, that Men must be indifferent in determining their own Actions; then, according to the same, the more they are determined by Inclination, either good or bad, the less they have of Desert: the more good Actions are performed from good Dispositions, the less Praise-worthy; and the more evil Deeds are from evil Dispositions, the less culpable; and in general, the more Mens Actions are from their Hearts, the less they are to be commended or condemned: which all must know is very contrary to natural Sense.

Moral Necessity is owing to the Power and Government of the Inclination of the Heart, either habitual or occasional, excited by Motive: but, according to natural and common Sense, the more a Man does any Thing with full Inclination of Heart, the more is it to be charged to his Account for his Condemnation, if it be an ill Action, and the more to be ascribed to him for his Praise, if it be good.

If the Mind were determined to evil Actions by Contingence, from a State of Indifference, then either there would be no Fault in them, or else the Fault would be in being so perfectly indifferent, that the Mind was equally liable to a bad or good Determination. And if this Indifference be Liberty, then the very Essence of the Blame or Fault would lie in the Liberty itself, or the Wickedness would, primarily and summarily, lie in being a free Agent. If there were no Fault in being indifferent, then there would be no Fault in the Determination's being agreeable to such a State of Indifference: that is, there could no

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Fault

^e Especially in Part III. Sect. 6. and 7.

Fault be reasonably found with this, *viz.* that opposite Determinations actually happen to take Place *indifferently*, sometimes good and sometimes bad, as Contingence governs and decides. And if it be a Fault to be indifferent to Good and Evil, then such Indifference is no Indifference to Good and Evil, but is a Determination to Evil, or to a Fault; and such an indifferent Disposition would be an evil, faulty Disposition, Tendency or Determination of Mind. So inconsistent are these Notions of Liberty, as essential to Praise or Blame.

The Author of the *Essays* supposes Mens natural delusive Sense of a Liberty of Contingence, to be, in Truth, the Foundation of all the Labour, Care and Industry of Mankind^f; and that if Mens *practical Ideas had been formed on the Plan of universal Necessity*, the ignava Ratio, the inactive Doctrine of the Stoics, would have followed; and that there would have been no Room for Forethought about Futurity, or any Sort of Industry and Care^g: plainly implying, that, in this Case, Men would see and know that all their Industry and Care signified nothing, was in vain, and to no Purpose, or of no Benefit; Events being fixed in an irrefragable Chain, and not at all depending on their Care and Endeavour; as he explains himself, particularly, in the Instance of Mens Use of Means to prolong Life^h: not only very contrary to what I largely maintain in my *Inquiry*ⁱ, but also very inconsistently with his own Scheme, in what he supposes of the Ends for which God has so deeply implanted this deceitful Feeling in Man's Nature; in which he manifestly supposes Mens Care

^f P. 184. ^g P. 189. ^h P. 184, 185. ⁱ Especially Part IV. Sect. 5.

Care and Industry not to be in vain and of no Benefit, but of great Use, yea of absolute Necessity, in order to the obtaining the most important Ends and necessary Purposes of human Life, and to fulfil the Ends of Action to the BEST ADVANTAGE; as he largely declares ^k. Now, how shall these Things be reconciled? That, if Men had *a clear View of real Truth*, they would see that there was *no Room* for their Care and Industry, because they would see it to be in vain, and of no Benefit; and yet that God, by having a clear View of real Truth, sees that their being excited to Care and Industry, will be of excellent Use to Mankind, and greatly for the Benefit of the World, yea absolutely necessary in Order to it: and that therefore the great Wisdom and Goodness of God to Men appears, in artfully contriving to put them on Care and Industry for their Good, which Good could not be obtained without them; and yet both these Things are maintained at once, and in the same Sentences and Words by this Author. The very Reason he gives, why God has put this deceitful Feeling into Men, contradicts and destroys itself; that God in his great Goodness to Men gave them such a deceitful Feeling, because it was very useful and necessary for them, and greatly for their Benefit, or excites them to Care and Industry for their own Good, which Care and Industry is useful and necessary to that End: and yet the very Thing that this great Benefit of Care and Industry is given as a Reason for, is God's deceiving Men in this very Point, in making them think their Care and Industry to be of great Benefit to them, when indeed it is of none at all; and if they saw the real Truth, they would see all their Endeav-

^k P. 188 — 192. and in many other Places.

Endeavours to be wholly useless, that there was no Room for them, and that the Event don't at all DEPEND upon them^l.

And besides, what this Author says, plainly implies (as appears by what has been already observed), that it is necessary Men should be deceived, by being made to believe that future Events are contingent, and their own future Actions free, with such a Freedom, as signifies that their Actions are not the Fruit of their own Desires, or Designs, but altogether contingent, fortuitous and without a Cause. But how should a Notion of Liberty, consisting in Accident or loose Chance, encourage Care and Industry? I should think it would rather entirely discourage every Thing of this Nature. For surely, if our Actions don't depend on our Desires and Designs, then they don't depend on our Endeavours, flowing from our Desires and Designs. This Author himself seems to suppose, that if Men had indeed such a Liberty of Contingence, it would render all Endeavours to determine or move Mens future Volitions, in vain: He says, that, in this Case, *to exhort, to instruct, to promise, or to threaten*, would be to no Purpose^m. Why? Because (as he himself gives the Reason), *then our Will would be capricious and arbitrary, and we should be thrown loose altogether, and our arbitrary Power could do us good or ill only by Accident*. But if such a loose fortuitous State would render vain others Endeavours upon us, for the same Reason would it make useless our Endeavours on ourselves: for Events that are truly contingent and accidental, and altogether loose from and independent of all foregoing Causes, are indepen-

^l P. 188, 189, &c.

^m P. 178, 213, 214;

independent on every foregoing Cause within ourselves, as well as in others.

I suppose that it is so far from being true, that our Minds are naturally possessed with a Notion of such Liberty as this, so strongly, that it is impossible to root it out, that indeed Men have no such Notion of Liberty at all, and that it is utterly impossible, by any Means whatsoever, to implant or introduce such a Notion into the Mind. As no such Notions as imply Self-contradiction and Self-abolition can subsist in the Mind, as I have shewn in my *Inquiry*ⁿ; I think a mature sensible Consideration of the Matter, sufficient to satisfy any one, that even the greatest and most learned Advocates themselves for Liberty of Indifference and Self-determination, have no such Notion; and that indeed they mean something wholly inconsistent with, and directly subversive of what they strenuously affirm, and earnestly contend for. By a Man's having a Power of determining his own Will, they plainly mean a Power of determining his Will, as he pleases, or as he chuses; which supposes that the Mind has a Choice, prior to its going about to conform any Action or Determination to it. And if they mean that they determine even the original or prime Choice, by their own Pleasure or Choice, as the Thing that causes and directs it; I scruple not most boldly to affirm, that they speak they know not what, and that of which they have no Manner of Idea; because no such contradictory Notion can come into, or have a Moment's Subsistence in the Mind of any Man living, as an original or first Choice being caused, or brought into Being, by Choice. After all they say,
they

ⁿ P. 257, 258. See also P. 49, 56, 57, 73, 74, 79, 183—187, 281, 282, 298—301.

they have no higher or other Conception of Liberty, than that vulgar Notion of it, which I contend for, *viz.* a Man's having Power or Opportunity to do as he chuses : or if they had a Notion that every Act of Choice was determined by Choice, yet it would destroy their Notion of the Contingence of Choice ; for then no one Act of Choice would arise contingently, or from a State of Indifference, but every individual Act, in all the Series, would arise from foregoing Bias or Preference, and from a Cause predetermining and fixing its Existence, which introduces at once such a Chain of Causes and Effects, each preceding Link decisively fixing the following, as they would by all Means avoid.

And such Kind of Delusion and Self-contradiction as this don't arise in Mens Minds by Nature : it is not owing to any natural Feeling which God has strongly fixed in the Mind and Nature of Man ; but to false Philosophy, and strong Prejudice, from a deceitful Abuse of Words. It is *artificial* ; not in the Sense of the Author of the *Essays*, supposing it to be a deceitful Artifice of God ; but artificial as opposed to natural, and as owing to an artificial deceitful Management of Terms, to darken and confound the Mind. Men have no such Thing when they first begin to exercise Reason ; but must have a great deal of Time to blind themselves with metaphysical Confusion, before they can embrace, and rest in such Definitions of Liberty as are given, and imagine they understand them.

On the whole, I humbly conceive, that whosoever will give himself the Trouble of weighing, what I have offered to Consideration in my *Inquiry*, must be sensible, that such a moral Necessity of Mens Actions as I maintain, is not at all inconsistent with any Liberty that any Creature has, or can have, as
a free,

a free, accountable, moral Agent, and Subject of moral Government ; and that this moral Necessity is so far from being inconsistent with Praise and Blame, and the Benefit and Use of Mens own Care and Labour, that on the contrary it implies the very Ground and Reason, why Mens Actions are to be ascribed to them as their own, in that Manner as to infer Desert, Praise and Blame, Approbation and Remorse of Conscience, Reward and Punishment ; and that it establishes the moral System of the Universe, and God's moral Government, in every Respect, with the proper Use of Motives, Exhortations, Commands, Counsels, Promises, and Threatenings ; and the Use and Benefit of Endeavours, Care and Industry : and that therefore there is no Need that the strict philosophic Truth should be at all concealed from Men ; no Danger in *Contemplation* and *profound Discovery* in these Things. So far from this, that the Truth in this Matter is of vast Importance, and extremely needful to be known ; and that the more clearly and perfectly the real Fact is known, and the more constantly it is in View, the better ; and particularly, that the clear and full Knowledge of that which is the true System of the Universe, in these Respects, would greatly establish the Doctrines which teach the true Christian Scheme of divine Administration in the City of God, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in its most important Articles ; and that these Things never can be well established, and the opposite Errors, so subversive of the whole Gospel, which at this Day so greatly and generally prevail, be well confuted, or the Arguments by which they are maintained, answered, till these Points are settled : While this is not done, it is, to me, beyond Doubt, that the Friends of those great Gospel Truths, will but poorly maintain their Controversy with the Adver-

Adversaries of those Truths : They will be obliged often to dodge, shuffle, hide, and turn their Backs ; and the latter will have a strong Fort, from whence they never can be driven, and Weapons to use, which those whom they oppose will find no Shield to screen themselves from ; and they will always puzzle, confound, and keep under the Friends of sound Doctrine ; and glory, and vaunt themselves in their Advantage over them ; and carry their Affairs with an high Hand, as they have done already for a long Time past.

I conclude, Sir, with asking your Pardon for troubling you with so much said in Vindication of myself from the Imputation of advancing a Scheme of Necessity, of a like Nature with that of the Author of the *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*. Considering that what I have said is not only in Vindication of myself, but, as I think, of the most important Articles of moral Philosophy and Religion ; I trust in what I know of your Candour, that you will excuse,

Your obliged Friend and Brother,

STOCKBRIDGE,
July 25, 1757.

J. EDWARDS.

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